

stances regarding my bird are difficult to unravel because the species is generally stationary once it reaches its breeding quarters. Gusty easterly winds were blowing the day he arrived but it is difficult to envisage these blowing him all the way from Victoria or Tasmania.

— T. ALLEN, Cuthbert, via Albany.

Notes on a mistletoe weevil — *Metyrus albicollis* Germ. — *Metyrus albicollis* Germ., is a small, ca 10 mm, cryptic weevil found associated with the mistletoe *Amyema preissii* that grows on acacias. In Western Australia I have collected specimens from mistletoe in Jam, *Acacia acuminata*, at Goomalling, New Norcia, Northam and Williams, and for mistletoe in *A. rostellifera* at Geraldton, Greenough and Leeman.

The weevil has a wide distribution and Lea (1909) described specimens collected in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. He referred to one of the specimens as "taken from a mistletoe".

I found that the larvae of *M. albicollis* feed inside the mistletoe stems and the enlarged haustorial areas. In the process they form round tunnels as they chew their way through the soft woody tissue. From observation of larval sizes and tunnel dimensions it may be deduced that the female weevil deposits eggs on the outer, fine stems of the mistletoe. The newly emerged larvae then burrow down the stems to the haustorial region. Only one larva will occupy a stem. In a large mistletoe there may be fifty stems with five to twenty occupied by developing larvae.

Adult *M. albicollis* can be found throughout the year. They complete their development in the swollen stem bases, or in the haustoria. They emerge as adults from round holes to feed on the mistletoe leaves. They rest in crevices on the haustoria and twigs or in the open situations where they resemble the droppings of the Mistletoe bird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* (Figure 1).



Figure 1. *Metyrus albicollis* and dropping of Mistletoe bird. Northam, December 1969.

On occasions an interesting association between *M. albicollis* and ants, *Tetraponera* sp. has been observed (Figure 2). The ants occupy the tunnels made by the larvae and, when a weevil and ants are outside on the haustoria the ants appear to have a close relationship with the beetle. I have observed them climbing over and 'licking' the elytra; at no time have I seen ants attacking the weevils. The beetles will move back into their tunnels and, if these are occupied by *Tetraponera*, the ants will precede the beetle which then blocks the entrance.

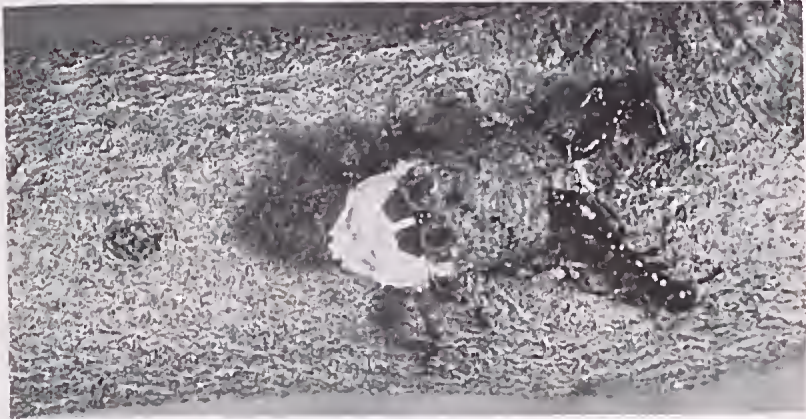


Figure 2. *Metyrus albicollis* and ants, *Tetraponera* sp. on stem of mistletoe, *Amyema preissii*. Northam, December 1969.

As *Metyrus albicollis* so closely resembles the droppings of *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* I have suggested to the Common Names of Insects Committee of the C.S.I.R.O. Canberra, A.C.T. that this species be given the common name of Mistletoebird-dropping Weevil.

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REFERENCE

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— R.P. McMILLAN, Western Australian Museum, Perth 6000

Grey Teal breeding on Rottnest Island — The Grey Teal *Anas gibberifrons* has been a regular non-breeding visitor to Rottnest Island for many years (Storr 1965, *Emu* 64: 105-113; Saunders and de Rebeira 1985, *The bird life of Rottnest Island*). It has been recorded in small groups (less than 30 birds) from the island during all seasons of the year where it mostly frequents Salmon and Lighthouse Swamps. Late on 25 December 1985 a pair of adult Grey Teal were seen on Bulldozer Swamp accompanied by two ducklings about one quarter adult size and unable to fly. When approached, the adults led the ducklings into vegetation on an island in the middle of the swamp. In the evening of 26 December